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UNCLAS BAMAKO 001423

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SUBJECT: Bamako Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza reviews progress, but much more needs to be done; USG leads pledges totaling almost \$500 million

Ref: State 190899

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¶1. Summary: Meeting in Bamako Dec. 6-8, international donors pledged approximately \$475.9 million in new assistance for the global fight against avian and pandemic influenza (API), including \$100 million from the USG (the largest single pledge, followed by Canada and the European Commission). The new pledges came very close to the minimal requirements for a successful conference, but there are signs that momentum in the fight against the disease - despite the spread of outbreaks from 14 to 55 countries in 2006 alone -- is beginning to slow. Malian President Toure in his welcoming address praised the USG for its commitment to the fight against API. Major effort may be required in the coming months to maintain worldwide momentum, including a successful IPAPI conference in New Delhi next year. Puzzlingly, the Indians were a no-show in Bamako. Nevertheless, the IPAPI Core Group, meeting on the margins of the conference outlined key areas of focus for the international effort in the coming months and remained optimistic that New Delhi would generate further funding. End Summary.

New Money for Fighting API

¶2. The "Fourth International Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza," a ministerial-level meeting organized by the Government of Mali, the African Union, and the European Commission, took place in Bamako December 6-8. Participants reviewed progress in fulfilling previous funding commitments and donors pledged additional funds for API.

¶3. For new pledges, the USG led the way with \$100 million (with more to follow later in FY-2007, pending congressional authorization) above our pledge at the Beijing conference in January 2006. (Included in the pledge was the US contribution of \$100,000 for conference expenses.) The tally of new assistance pledges at Bamako was as follows (in millions USD):

Donor	Bamako Pledge	Beijing Pledge	Total Pledge
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USA	\$100.0	\$334.0	\$434.0
Canada	92.5	0	92.5
EC	88.2	124.4	212.6
Japan	67.0	155.0	222.0
Others	128.2	1260.8	1389.0
Total	475.9	1874.2	2350.1

A total of 14 countries made pledges at the conference. As a result of the new promises, total pledges against API, starting with the Beijing conference, have surpassed \$2.3 billion.

¶14. The Bamako pledges approached the minimum yearly requirement against API as described by UN System Influenza Coordinator (UNSIC) Dr. David Nabarro. Just before the conference began, the U.S. delegation chaired a meeting of the Core Group of the U.S.-initiated International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) to coordinate objectives for the conference, including continuing worldwide focus and action on the API threat and demonstrating that donors, including the USG, are meeting funding commitments. Nabarro stated the conference could be judged a success if donors pledged \$500-\$700 million in assistance, thus meeting needs worldwide for the next year, provided additional funds at a comparable level were made available in the coming 2-3 years as well and a significant portion of the funds pledged were not earmarked and were to benefit Africa. Many of the donors stated that a significant portion of their new pledges would go to Africa.

Conference Themes and Discussion

¶15. In his keynote address, Nabarro discussed the rapid expansion of avian influenza outbreaks in recent years and noted that the

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likelihood of the virus changing genetically and becoming transmissible in humans in a sustained way is not known but increases with the amount of virus circulating. He cited three factors for successful API program implementation: political leadership and successful alliances among shareholders; resources and capacity to scale up implementation with effective management systems; and long-term changes to reduce risks of animal and human influenza, including social mobilization for sustained adoption of new practices, and greater action on compensation.

¶16. An FAO representative made it clear that, although the avian influenza situation is "looking up" due to large-scale activities of governments and others and resources provided by donors, the battle has not been won and must continue. The WHO representative, discussing planning for a possible pandemic, said that global surveillance still has many "blind spots." The European CDC representative said the EU needs to undertake two to three more years of pandemic preparedness activities. In a well-received session, attendees heard from the World Bank, UNICEF, and others regarding new studies and strategies on compensation and culling of poultry and on communications and public awareness activities. The Indonesia representative described at length the Tangerang project (done jointly with the U.S. and Singapore). In its intervention on behalf of non-governmental organizations, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies stressed that community-based organizations and civil society play a unique and complementary role and have to work cooperatively to mitigate API risks and challenges.

¶17. At the end of the conference, delegates approved by consensus the Bamako Declaration (available at www.avianinfluenzaconference4.org). The declaration noted that the conference built on recommendations made during the previous international API conferences; that list began with IPAPI in Washington in October 2005. Consistent with the IPAPI Core Principles, the declaration further strengthened international commitment to transparency in reporting of influenza cases and to immediate sharing of epidemiological data and samples with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE in French), the Food and

Agriculture Organization (FAO), the OFFLU Network, and the World Health Organization (WHO) to detect and characterize the nature and evolution of any outbreaks as quickly as possible in order to achieve early containment.

¶8. Special Representative John Lange participated in both press conferences held during the three-day meeting.

Praise for U.S. Commitment

¶9. The U.S. fielded a strong interagency delegation led by the Special Representative on Avian and Pandemic Influenza and including USAID Assistant Administrator Dr. Kent Hill, USDA/APHIS Administrator Dr. Ron DeHaven, and HHS Influenza International Coordinator Dr. David Bell.

¶10. In his speech on Dec 6, Assistant Administrator Hill noted all countries, including the U.S., benefited from international cooperation against API. He described the USG's National Strategy, introduced in November 2005, followed by our National Implementation Plan. Hill also underscored USG international assistance, noting that our \$324 million in assistance disbursed so far has reached 73 countries, helping 53 of them to develop their national plans.

¶11. In his speech during the session on pandemic preparedness on Dec. 7, Ambassador Lange noted global progress on API since President Bush's announcement of the International Partnership at UNGA in September 2005. He described increased USG assistance to Africa for fighting avian influenza and for preparing for a possible human pandemic. He also emphasized that USG activities, where possible, emphasize support for strengthening animal and human health capacity for the long term. (The remarks are posted on the State Department website at www.State.gov/g/avianflu.)

¶12. On the conference's second day, Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure praised USG leadership and engagement on API. Referring to the inaugural IPAPI meeting in Washington, Toure said the USG has demonstrated "determined engagement" on API since October 2005 and noted that our delegation, with representatives from four USG agencies, was another indication of strong U.S. commitment. In his prepared remarks to the plenary, UNSIC's Nabarro also praised IPAPI and affiliated initiatives for maintaining global political coordination against API. Head of the African Union (AU) delegation, Commissioner for Social Affairs Bience Gwanas, also thanked the USG for its support against API and pleaded for it to continue.

¶13. On the margins of the conference, USDel members met with heads of delegation and others in a series of highly productive meetings with WHO, FAO, OIE, the AU, the Government of Mali (Minister of Livestock), the Government of Nigeria (Representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture and Health) and others.

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What Next?

¶14. Despite general satisfaction with the level of pledges and universal acknowledgement of Africa's critical need (eight countries so far with confirmed cases of avian influenza, but fears that the disease could spread much more widely), there was a sense among some donors that momentum against the disease may be slowing. African delegations, on the other hand, tended to praise the conference as highly informative and very useful. Approximately 72 countries attended the conference, but notably absent was India, the host for the next big meeting -- IPAPI -- tentatively slated for October 2007.

¶15. Special Rep Lange again convened the IPAPI Core Group representatives (including incoming EU President Germany) and invited UN agencies, OIE, and the World Bank to a meeting immediately following the conference to discuss key actions for international focus in the next six months and to make tentative decisions on the sequence of upcoming international meetings. Dr. Nabarro proposed four areas that were refined by discussion that warranted greatest attention, including: a. improving

implementation in Africa and the need for new financing mechanisms; b. refining technical guidance that was delivered at the conference on compensation and communications and developing new guidance on animal vaccination; c. strengthening pandemic readiness globally and developing ways to assist resource-poor nations; and d. further intensifying coordinated action in countries that are particularly challenging, such as Indonesia and possibly Egypt.

¶16. The Core Group also agreed to recommend to the Government of India that the next high-level international meeting on API, which the Bamako Declaration had reaffirmed is to be held in India, should take place in October-December 2007. Given that timing and the level of pledges made in Bamako, the India meeting will need to include a pledging session. The World Bank agreed to update the status of donor pledges as of June 30, 2007, and prepare a report some months prior to the next pledging conference.

¶17. There also was consensus in the Core Group that a broad technical meeting covering issues related to animal and human health should take place between now and the New Delhi meeting. This meeting may be hosted by a UN agency, possibly FAO, and its agenda would be developed by UNSIC in coordination with others. The IPAPI Core Group would convene in-person on the margins of that technical meeting, in addition to the regular Core Group conference calls approximately every other month.

¶18. Special Rep Lange has cleared this cable.

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